3 1761 08109130 8

CECIL SPRING RICE

IN MEMORIAM

VALENTINE CHIROL

DA
46
S63
C5

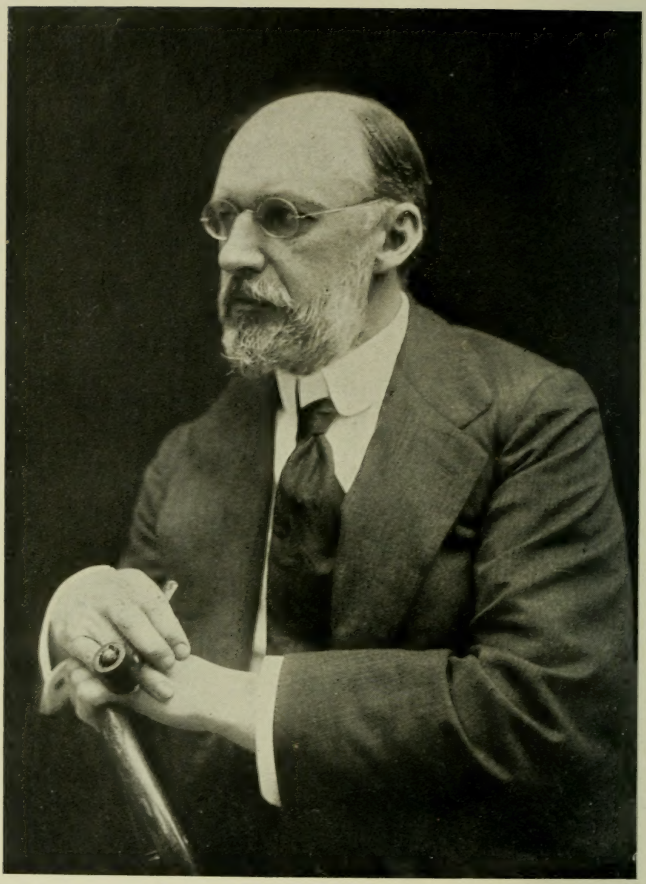
L. W. Davis
from Mary
March 1921

CECIL SPRING-RICE

IN MEMORIAM

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
University of Toronto

http://www.archive.org/details/cecilspringricei00chir



CECIL SPRING RICE

CECIL SPRING-RICE

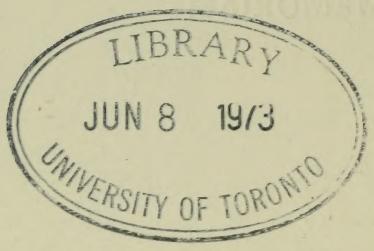
IN MEMORIAM

BY

VALENTINE CHIROL

WITH PORTRAIT

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1919



DA
46
S63C5

All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Cecil Spring-Rice	1
Poem by Alfred Noyes	29
An Appreciation from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs	31
Two Ideals: an Address by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice delivered before the Canadian Club at Ottawa	37
An Eton Memorial	55
The Cecil Spring-Rice Memorial Fund . .	61

"AN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS NEVER SPARED HIMSELF"

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

"I vow to thee, my country—all earthly things above—
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love—
The love that asks no question; the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

"And there's another country, I've heard of long ago—
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know.
We may not count her armies; we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently, her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are Peace."

C. A. S. R.

WASHINGTON,
Jan. 12, 1918.

CECIL SPRING-RICE

THE foregoing lines were written by Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, His Majesty's Ambassador to the United States, on the eve of his final departure from Washington. The vow recorded in them had been kept long before he put it into words, for he had served his country for a quarter of a century with the "love that never falters"; and, though he knew it not, he was already a dying man. With his singular clarity of vision he had realised from the beginning of the war that its issue might well depend in the last resort on the attitude of the great American Republic; and so acute a sense as his of the awful responsibility that rested in such circumstances upon a British Ambassador during the prolonged period of American hesitation and neutrality, would have told severely on a much more robust constitution. If diplomacy may be compared to active warfare,

he had fought for two years in the most dangerous and important salient of the British lines—had fought, as diplomatists must ever fight, silently and patiently but indomitably under the poisoned shell-fire of German intrigues ; and when, with the entry of the great American democracy into the war, he had "done his bit" and was free to quit the post he had held with unswerving tenacity through the days of stress and storm, he was, as we now know, doomed—or should we say, privileged ?—to survive but for a short time the hour of his crowning achievement. It was, at any rate, the end for which he had himself prayed not long before in some verses written on the death of a great friend who had passed away as suddenly as he was fated to do :

"Make no long tarrying,* O my God,
May the downward path be swiftly trod,
Swiftly the falling feet descend ;
Short the road and soon the end.

* Cf. Psalm lxx. 5. Spring-Rice was a great reader of the Psalms. By a curious coincidence Psalm lxx. is appointed to be read at evensong on the 13th day of the month ; and it was in the night of January 13–14, 1918, that he died with "no long tarrying."

When the doom is spoken, let it fall;
And when Thou takest, then take all.

"And as the sun sinks in the sea,
Nor dim nor pale nor overcast,
By no sad change, nor slow degree,
Radiant and royal to the last:—
So take the gift Thou gavest me."

Spring-Rice was an admirable product of his race and class and education, yet he had great originality. With Irish blood through his father, who was the younger son of the first Lord Monteagle, he inherited some of the qualities of his mother's North of England family, the Marshalls, and their affection for the English lakes. At Eton and at Balliol he not only achieved distinction as a scholar, but acquired a reputation for a ready and whimsical and sometimes rather mordant wit which clung to him, not always to his professional advantage, throughout life. His first efforts at poetry came out in an Eton book, "Out of School"; and his Oxford Rhymes are not yet forgotten. But it was in his deep sense of reverence for all that was great and noble in the past, and in his love

of all that is beautiful in nature and literature and art, that the influence of his early associations at school and college and at home was most strongly and permanently reflected. If his impatience of conventions sometimes startled the very conventional world of diplomacy, he brought into it the qualities of sympathy and imagination which it often lacks.

Whenever the time comes for the record of his life to be written, it will show, I believe, in a very striking way, how his whole career seems to have been a preparation for the final struggle at Washington in which he stood immovably for the finest and most honourable traditions of British diplomacy against the brutal and corrupt methods of German statecraft. The old gibe—that a diplomatist is sent to lie abroad for the good of his country—was as repugnant to his own conception of a diplomatist's duties and functions as to his innate personal rectitude. He believed that the business of a diplomatist is in the first place that of a peacemaker who, without ignoring international differences or

being blind to possibilities of open conflict, should labour unceasingly to mitigate and avert them within the limits compatible with national interests and national dignity ; that in the second place it is the duty of a diplomatist not only to maintain friendly and close relations with the rulers and governing circles of the country to which he is accredited, but to familiarise himself as far as possible with all the great currents of public opinion and all the great movements, social, religious and political, which in the long run determine the policy of autocracies that mould them to their purpose as well as of democracies that merely reflect them ; and thirdly that in his own personal attitude and mode of life the diplomatist should seek a golden mean between the reserve and reticence which may be easily misconstrued into aloofness and distrust, and the facile appeals to a popularity wider than he can properly aspire to in a foreign country without suspicion of overstepping the limits of a position necessarily circumscribed by the privileges it carries with it. For the outer trappings and

the ceremonial side of his profession he had perhaps an excessive contempt. He preferred to rely on the more human qualities of simplicity, directness and transparent honesty in association with great power of work and a fine intellect.

More fortunate than most young diplomatists, who often have to serve an interminable apprenticeship of mere routine work and somewhat frivolous drudgery, Spring-Rice, after entering the Foreign Office in 1882, was soon brought into intimate contact, first as assistant private secretary to Lord Granville and then as précis-writer to Lord Rosebery, with the whole range of world-wide affairs which come within the purview of a British Foreign Secretary. His first post abroad, as well as his last, was Washington, where he spent with brief intervals all the earlier part of his career, gaining that thorough and sympathetic insight into American life and American character, and making the many enduring friendships, which were to serve him in such excellent stead when he returned

there as Ambassador at the most critical period in the whole history of Anglo-American relations.

The turning point in his career was his transfer as Second Secretary to the Embassy in Berlin in 1895. For, in the three years which he then spent in Germany, he witnessed some of the most significant manifestations of the aggressive spirit infused into the "higher policy" of the German Empire after its youthful sovereign had thrown off the old Chancellor's tutelage. In the summer of 1895 Germany made her first bid for a place in the Far Eastern sun by turning against Japan and joining with Russia and France to despoil her of the fruits of her victories over China. In the early days of 1896 the Emperor's famous telegram to President Kruger sent through the whole British Empire the first thrill of alarm at the dangerous potentialities of Germanism. In 1897, after the Turkish armies, reorganised by a German military mission, had defeated the unfortunate Greeks in Thessaly, William II.'s effusive greetings to the "ever-victorious"

Sultan foreshadowed the price he was prepared to pay for the use of Turkey as his "bridge-head to world-dominion." In 1898 he watched, with an interest rendered keener by the intimate correspondence he kept up with many influential friends in Washington, the abortive efforts of the Wilhelmstrasse to persuade Great Britain, on the plea of European solidarity, into acting as the spear-head of at least a diplomatic offensive against the United States at the beginning of the Spanish-American war.

But Spring-Rice had not been content merely to study these outward manifestations of Germany's "higher policy." While he was in Berlin he did what few diplomatists cared or were encouraged to do. He explored, so far as the restraints of his official position allowed, the whole field of German life, the character of the people, the ingenious constitutional machinery which Bismarck had so carefully devised for securing the supremacy of Prussia within a Federal Empire, and for combining the autocracy of the Hohenzollerns with the illusion of parliamentary institutions,

the vigorous development of commercial and industrial activity, promoted and controlled by and for the State, the growth of a new "will to power" nurtured in the schools and colleges as well as in the barrack-room, and equipped with all the resources of modern science for economic as well as military conquest. Spring-Rice was a diligent student of history, but he was also a student of men.

It was in Berlin, where I was then Correspondent of *The Times*, that we became close friends; and I remember well how he used to envy me my opportunities of meeting the leaders of the Socialist and other political parties, whose acquaintance no diplomatist could venture to cultivate without giving dire offence in "all-highest" circles. But he was quick to realise that German politicians, however large they might bulk in the press and in Reichstag debates, and German political parties, however formidable the numbers they might poll at general elections, were little more than *simulacra;* and that the whole power was concentrated in a masterful ruling caste, itself dominated by a masterful

young sovereign, whose genius was a strange but vital blend of medieval mysticism and modern materialism fired by overweening ambition. And the whole nation, even those who protested most loudly, were ready to respond to his call. Spring-Rice saw all this and the menace there was in it for the future of the world. "These Germans," he once said to me, "are a tremendous and terrible nation. They are going to laugh to scorn the old French saying: 'Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait'! They have got all the cunning of wicked old age, and all the forcefulness of lustful youth."

Out of the striving pushfulness of modern Germany Spring-Rice passed to the slowly-moving East, first to Constantinople and Teheran and then to Cairo, where, as he put it, he went "back to school" under Lord Cromer, being temporarily seconded from his own service to act as British Commissioner of the Egyptian Debt; nor were they unprofitable school-days under such a master. From Cairo he was promoted, in 1903, to be Secretary of Embassy at St Petersburg during the

stormy years of the Russo-Japanese war and the first revolutionary movements which followed the reverses of the Russian armies in Manchuria. In 1906 he returned to Persia, this time as British Minister, to witness the further stages of that ancient kingdom's decline. Then followed three years of relative rest and ease in Sweden, for the British Legation at Stockholm was mainly an "observation post." Sweden, though determined to keep away, so far as possible, from the cross-currents of world-politics, stood very near—in some respects perilously near—to them. Spring-Rice was a keen observer, and all that he saw and heard in Stockholm fortified the conviction, which had steadily gathered strength in him from his experiences in the Near and the Middle East and in Russia, that the war-cry of Pan-Germanism, "Delenda est Britannia," was merely an indiscreet echo of the "higher policy" to which the rulers of Germany were definitely committing themselves.

In Turkey he had seen Austria and Russia, instigated by Germany, blocking the

endeavours of the Western Powers to abate the Ottoman *régime* of misrule and massacre in Armenia and Macedonia, while William II. was consolidating his hold upon the Red Sultan by encouraging his Pan-Islamic schemes and pointing always to England as the enemy. In Egypt he had seen Germans striving desperately to keep alive the embers of Anglo-French quarrels over the valley of the Nile. In Russia, even more clearly than in Persia, he had seen Germany steadily elbowing Russian expansion away from Europe towards more distant fields of Asiatic adventure, where the seeds of conflict between the Russian and British Empires were then still dangerously abundant; and, when the results of the Russo-Japanese War defeated Germany's calculations, he saw her exploiting Russia's internal troubles and pressing on the bewildered Russian autocracy the old Bismarckian arguments for dynastic solidarity in the presence of revolutionary forces that were alleged by the Germans to draw their chief inspiration from England.

Spring-Rice had heartily welcomed the

Anglo-French Agreement, for which, since his Berlin days, he had done useful spade-work wherever he went; and he recognised the paramount importance of the Anglo-Russian Agreement as a guarantee against the revival of the old Three Emperors' Alliance under German hegemony. But he was in Persia when it was concluded, and he knew the price we should have to pay for it in the loss of our slender remnant of influence with the Persians. Anything that savoured of *real-politik* was abhorrent to him. "Its great apostle allowed himself only one luxury of emotion—to hate;" whereas Spring-Rice could not refuse himself the luxury of sympathising even with the feeble gropings towards liberty of the unfortunate Persian people, who used to take sanctuary in thousands within the grounds of the British Legation in Teheran. Nor had he much faith in the stability of the Russian autocracy or its permanent divorce from the more congenial influence of Berlin, though he never questioned the personal loyalty of the Tsar.

In his private letters, and even, I believe, in his official dispatches, Spring-Rice was so intent on counteracting the easy optimism which prevailed in most quarters in England, as we know to our cost, right up to July, 1914, that he often got the reputation of being a hopeless pessimist. He was never that; for, if his faith in human progress, and in a divine providence that shapes all things towards higher ends, had ever wavered, he would have been preserved from mere pessimism by his keen sense of humour—which, unlike most people, he exercised upon himself as often as upon others—as well as by his intense love of nature and by his strong family affections.

He had lost his father and mother when he was still young, but he had brothers and sisters to whom he was devoted; and his marriage in 1904 to the only daughter of his former chief, Sir Frank Lascelles, brought him unclouded happiness. Besides the loving care and soothing influence she constantly brought to bear on his high-strung and somewhat excitable temperament, Lady Spring-

Rice gave him a boy and a girl upon whom he lavished the tender and cheerful understanding of children's ways which made him a prime favourite and playmate and king of story-tellers to all the children with whom he happened to come into close contact. It was his lot to dwell mostly in cities and amongst men, but his heart was always in the country, and especially in the hills—most of all, perhaps, in the Cumberland hills, which he knew and loved above all others. He had sometimes an irresistible craving for their solitude; and at Oldchurch on Ullswater, which was his English home for many years, he would steal out quietly at night to watch the sunrise from the top of Helvellyn. The wilder mountains of Northern Persia appealed to him in the same way, and the primitive modes of travel which bring one so close to nature. I quote from a letter to myself.

"Have you forgotten your Persian wanderings? The early start while the stars are still bright, the sword of Orion remaining as long as any. Then on the top of the hill

if possible before the sun gets hot ; the burst of golden light on the rocky crest, and at last the view of the other side ; hill after hill with Demavend behind. Then the awful descent ; the poor pony struggling behind, looking appealingly at you as you try and pull him down some particularly bad drop, and his sad grunt as he steps down all four feet at once. Then the valley and a long delicious canter between the rocky hill sides till springs appear and the green patch in the distance means the camping ground. . . . I got so tired of seeing Demavend look down at me wherever I was that at last I persuaded a Persian servant to go up with me. I spent two nights on the mountain and got up without difficulty except getting very giddy from the thin air."

No wonder, for Demavend is about 18,000 feet high, and the ascent of the great snow-clad cone is a steady grind, that tests endurance rather than mountaineering skill.

It was as much his sense of public duty as his legitimate ambition to reach the top of his profession that made Spring-Rice stick to the often disheartening road of diplomacy. He was impulsive and sometimes impatient, and in smaller matters inclined to rush to

premature conclusions and even to act hastily. But on the greater issues with which he was confronted his judgment, based on careful study and genuine knowledge, was seldom at fault. I would quote from one other of his letters to me, written from Stockholm in 1911 :

"At the end of the 18th century it was the revolution which was dominant and seemed the greater danger to Europe. Now it is the counter-revolution—State organisation—incarnate in Prussia. I wonder whether we shall have to go through a similar crisis. Will Power after Power, 'with sombre acquiescence,' accept what they think is inevitable and, rather than fight, take the consequences of defeat without the perils of war? That is what the small Powers are doing. I wonder if England will prove stubborn or not. The main thing is that we must fight in a good cause."

It was with such forebodings of an impending cataclysm that he proceeded in 1912 to Washington to take up the appointment of Ambassador to the United States—the appointment which above all others he

had always hoped for as the crown of his career, because he felt confident that, with his knowledge of, and genuine liking for, the American people, he could render better service in the democratic atmosphere of the great western Republic than at any European court. He found many old friends and made many new ones, but his health was growing more and more precarious; and he had not quite recovered from a very serious illness when he came home on leave shortly before the great European crisis of 1914. On arriving in London he spent ten days with Sir Edward Grey and shared his Chief's increasing apprehensions of the storm that was gathering on the international horizon. During the last week of deadly suspense he never had any doubt that the day for which Germany had been preparing for years was at hand, and that there could be but one course open to us, that of duty and honour as well as of national self-preservation.

As soon as the die was cast he prepared to return to America, whither his wife and children followed him shortly afterwards.

His ship was pursued by a German cruiser, but he perhaps ran less personal danger then than he was exposed to later from German *condottieri* in America. Many people believed that the murderous affray in Mr Jack Morgan's house in Washington in the summer of 1915 was part of a plot against the life of the British Ambassador, who was staying with him at the time. He was prepared for every form of German frightfulness; he was prepared for the bitter hostility of many alien and anti-British elements in America; he was prepared for the deep-rooted prejudices of a large volume of genuinely American opinion. What he was not prepared for was the mischievous activity of some of our own "pacifists," who did not hesitate to palliate the crimes of Germany and to distort our war aims in order to embitter American feeling against their own country, and to deter the American democracy from converting its instinctive sympathies with the Allied cause into active co-operation.

It is too early yet to attempt to appraise exactly Spring-Rice's share in bringing about

the entry of the United States into the war. Some of his critics on this side have been inclined to rate it far less high than the Americans themselves, who must after all be the better judges. He had little faith in the coarser methods of propaganda, in which he knew we could never compete successfully with the Germans. Indeed he was convinced, from his knowledge of the American character, that such a tremendous issue as that which then confronted the American people would not be determined by any sensational or emotional appeal, and still less by any attempt to drive them. Only the stern logic of events would persuade them to turn their backs on their century-old traditions and prejudices, and plunge into the unknown vortex of a great European conflict. From his knowledge of Germany, on the other hand, he relied confidently upon the Germans to provide the events required for the conversion of the American democracy. That conversion the British Embassy, he believed, could do little to hasten, but might easily, through sheer

excess of zeal, do a vast deal to delay or even to prevent.

Difficult and delicate questions arose, and were bound to arise, out of the most legitimate exercise of our naval power, between the British and American Governments, so long as America remained neutral and constituted herself the zealous champion of neutral interests. On two occasions, namely when Great Britain extended contraband to cotton, and when she "blacklisted" a number of firms suspected of trading with the enemy, the situation was seriously strained. Any slight error of judgment, any indiscreet move or word that could give a handle to the enemy or an occasion for unfriendly elements in America to blaspheme, might have had immediately disastrous consequences. Spring-Rice, mindful of what had happened to some of his predecessors in far less stormy times, never stumbled once, though many were the traps laid for him. In his official notes and conversations with the State Department, he upheld the British point of view in temperate and closely reasoned argument, but

he never departed in public from the reserve which he knew to be his one safe shield against misrepresentation and calumny.

Our friends in America, who saw the German Embassy become the headquarters of a great anti-British organisation all over the United States, could not at times quite understand why he would not allow the British Embassy to identify itself closely with their well-meant and much more legitimate activities. He valued their enthusiastic support of the British cause. Many of them were his own oldest friends; but for that very reason, and because some were known to be political opponents of the existing American administration, he felt, and often frankly told them, that the less intimate their association with the British Embassy, the more effective their efforts would be. He believed in the high purpose of the President; he knew himself to possess the confidence and respect of the United States Government; and he felt that, whenever the time arrived for Mr Wilson to carry the American people with him into the war, the

greatest service which the British Ambassador could then be found to have rendered, would be to have made it impossible for any American to charge the Head of the State with having yielded to British pressure, direct or indirect. This may well have been in President Wilson's mind when he bade Spring-Rice, who was paying him his farewell visit, remember that he would be always his friend —simple words, which, however, coming from so reserved a man as the President, had their own special significance.

To Spring-Rice the alliance of the two great English-speaking nations was the fulfilment of a life's dream, and its fulfilment in the noblest of causes. For him the great war was no mere clash of worldly ambitions. It was a phase of the eternal struggle between light and darkness.

As an Ambassador, and especially as a British Ambassador in the United States at a most critical period, when every word he might utter was liable to be subjected to the most dangerous misconstruction, he held that silence was golden, and during the whole war

he never spoke in public except once at Harvard in June, 1917, to return thanks in a few stirring words for the honorary degree of a Doctor of Law conferred upon him by that famous American University. It was only after he had left Washington that he ventured to reveal his innermost soul in a speech to the Canadian Club at Ottawa which deserves to be quoted in full, as it illustrates not only his great oratorical gifts, but the nobility of the faith that was in him. In a fine flight of eloquence, he described the Cross, which is emblazoned on our national ensign, as "a sign of patience under suffering, but not of patience under wrong," and as the immortal symbol of "the spirit of sacrifice."

About a fortnight later, Spring-Rice, who was waiting at Ottawa for the steamer that was to carry him home to England, went out skiing with his children, and spent the evening as usual, and in very good spirits, with his wife and his kindly hosts at Government House. He had not long retired to bed when

his brave heart suddenly failed, and he passed away without a struggle to the rest he had well earned. The following lines, though written by an English poet, Alfred Noyes, were first published in the *New York Times*, and afterwards so widely reproduced all over America that they may stand for the epitaph placed by the American people themselves upon the grave of one who had held the banner of England high amongst them at the most solemn hour of their national fortunes and our own.

POEM

By Alfred Noyes

I

" Steadfast as any soldier of the line
He served his England, with the imminent death
Poised at his heart ; nor did the world divine
The constant peril of each burdened breath.

" England, and the honour of England, he still served,
Walking the strict path, with the old high pride
Of those invincible knights who never swerved
One hair's-breadth from the way until they died.

" Quietness he loved, and books, and the grave beauty
Of England's Helicon, whose eternal light
Shines like a lantern on that road of duty,
Discerned of few, in this chaotic night.

" And his own pen, foretelling his release,
Told us that he foreknew the end was peace.

II

"Soldier of England, he shall live, unsleeping,
Among his friends, with the old proud flag above;
For, even to-day, her honour is in his keeping;
He has joined the hosts that guard her with their love.

"They shine like stars, unnumbered, happy legions,
In those high realms where all our darkness dies;
He moves, with honour, in those loftier regions,
Above this 'world of passion and of lies.'

"For so he called it, keeping his own high passion,
A silent flame before the true and good;
Not fawning on the throng in this world's fashion,
To come and see what all might see who would.

"Soldier of England, perfect, gentle knight,
The soul of Sidney welcomes you to-night."

AN APPRECIATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AN APPRECIATION

Mr Balfour, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has kindly sanctioned the publication of the following official dispatch addressed by him to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice in appreciation of his services at Washington. This dispatch was intended to meet Sir Cecil on his arrival in England. A copy of it was subsequently sent to his widow, but it has not hitherto been made public. It is not only a fine tribute to the late Ambassador, but a document of historical interest.

Foreign Office, S.W. 1.
February, 1918.

Sir,

I avail myself of the opportunity of Your Excellency's return to England on leave to place on record my high appreciation of the important services that you have rendered to our country and Government during the past five eventful years.

Your position as British Ambassador to the United

States at the outbreak of war was one of extreme difficulty, confronted as you were by a campaign of enemy intrigue, designed to impair your prestige and to destroy your influence with the Government to which you were accredited. It was inevitable that a certain transient measure of success should attend these machinations. Some sections of the population, of enemy origin, were actively hostile, some were indifferent, some were ill-informed. And though a great body of opinion understood and sympathised with the war aims of Great Britain and her Allies, yet this would not have sufficed to protect you from the consequences which a single false step might have brought upon you and upon the cause you represented. With unfailing judgment, and unwearied forbearance, you steered your course successfully through those days of difficulty; and it is in no small measure due to your exertions that the suspicions which so easily embittered the relations between the two great English-speaking peoples were dissipated—I trust for ever. The decision of the President to advise his countrymen to declare war on Germany was one of the turning points of history. You may well be proud to remember that at this great moment you were Ambassador at Washington, and that your conduct in that post largely contributed to prevent any trace of international friction which might have impeded or impaired the President's policy.

In conclusion my thanks are due to Your Excellency for your great ability in administering the onerous affairs of your Embassy during the past four years. During that period it has been compelled to

undertake an ever-growing number of duties, by their nature far removed from those performed by diplomatists in normal times. All these have been carried out by your subordinates, cheerfully and punctually, to the complete satisfaction of His Majesty's Government—a consummation due in no small degree to the inspiring example of an Ambassador who has never spared himself. I would ask you to take an early opportunity of conveying this appreciation of their services to those who during these memorable years worked under you at Washington with such zeal and such success.

I am, with great truth and respect, Sir,
Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

His Excellency,
The Right Honourable
SIR C. SPRING-RICE, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., etc., etc., etc.

TWO IDEALS

(This address was delivered at Ottawa a few days before the sudden and lamented death of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, and many have found in his words a strange and moving premonition of the end, which was so soon to come to a life, singular in its simple and beautiful Christian spirit. Few diplomats have been more distinguished and successful in their careers, and perhaps none has been more beloved by all associates.)

[*Reprinted by kind permission of the Canadian Club of Ottawa, from the Volume of Addresses*, 1917–18.]

TWO IDEALS

January 19, 1918.

You could not say anything, Mr President, which would be more welcome to me than your last words, when you said you welcomed me as one of yourselves. For thirty years, since I first had that experience of a gang-plough, which was painful—to my employers—I hope I have been one of you. My family has been and I have been Canadian. At the present moment, to revert to the gang-plough, I feel exactly as if I were operating it in the presence of Mr Crerar here when I speak before these great and famous orators sitting around me. I, a simple amateur, ignorant, unversed in oratory, have come to speak before you. Remember this, please: I am one of yourselves. Be kind, be indulgent.

This is the first speech that I have had the honour of delivering before the Canadian Club. It is also the last speech which I shall deliver as British Ambassador. I suppose I ought to explain those two facts.

The reason why, although you have been very kind in asking me to speak before—the reason why I did not, was that I thought on the whole it was better to leave the task of the oral education of the American continent to my German colleague. (Laughter and applause.) You all agree that I was right. (Laughter.) Some people were of a different opinion. Although I have learned in my history books that the Roman Capitol on an important occasion was saved by the cackling of geese, I have preferred to leave the defence of my country to other and less vocal means. That is why I have not had the honour of addressing you before.

The reason why I am not to have the honour of addressing you again in the capacity of British Ambassador is very plain to all of you, I am sure. The moment has come when the War Cabinet must have its

direct representative in Washington, somebody who is well versed in the latest developments in the field of war and the European situation. In the interest of the United States Government, of our own Government—and our own Government means you—we must have a direct and responsible representative of the War Cabinet in Washington. The result is that I have to go. It is for me an immense and irreparable loss. I cannot tell you how deeply I feel it; but, speaking before you, with your record, I don't think that I need have any doubt or hesitation in saying that we all understand that we have one only duty to perform, and that is to the cause. We must play the game. We must each play our part. But, I tell you, it is most difficult of all to cease to play a part at all, and my time has come.

Now, to turn from that painful subject to the business—your kind Secretary asked me what I was going to talk about. I said I didn't know. As a matter of fact, there is only one subject on which we can talk or on which we can think; that is the war. You

said, Mr President, that the great event of our times, of modern times, was that the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race were hand in hand fighting for the cause of liberty. Well, that is a truth which we all acknowledge, and I am a witness of what happened, to some extent. I wish I could tell you, as you have been kind enough to ask, everything I know about it. My only objection to that is that if I did I should lose my pension. (Laughter and applause.) But I will tell you very briefly one or two things out of my own personal experience as a diplomat of nearly thirty-five years' standing, of what I know about this great event.

I think anybody who came, as I did, to the United States five years ago, would have agreed in what everybody told me there, that the characteristic of that country was its intense desire for peace, its intense delight in all the arts of peace. There were other characteristics. The Democratic Party had always been opposed to the interference of the National Government in the State governments. The Democratic Party was also

pledged to put an end to the operations of the great combines. There was another peculiarity about which everybody talked. I have no doubt you, knowing the country as well as you do, must have heard it; that was the operations of the various foreign organisations with the purpose of dividing the allegiance of great masses of United States citizens. It was said that the United States of America were becoming disunited peoples. That was the great danger which was present in everybody's mind. That is a picture, an outline, of the general features of the situation as it was laid before me then, and before you.

What is the situation now? The most peaceful of all countries has gone to war. The Government which was opposed to national interference has taken hold of the national railways, is operating all the industries. The Government which was opposed to trusts and commercial and financial organisations is itself forming the greatest financial and commercial organisation in the world. I do not allude to the immense votes made by Congress without question, and the fact that

the draft was voted in a few weeks and carried out without any opposition, but what is a further fact, the salient fact in the United States now, and everybody will agree with me—Mr Consul-General, I am sure you will agree—is this: there can no longer be any talk about the disunited peoples of the United States. The people of the United States are practically unanimous. (Applause.) There is no doubt whatever about that; they are practically unanimous in carrying on the war. Can you imagine any change so great as that? Look upon this picture, and then think of what happened only five years ago. Think of what is happening now.

How has that enormous, gigantic, incredible change taken place? Was it my diplomacy? I am afraid not. Was it the diplomacy of my dear friend and colleague, M. Jusserand, who put all the energy, eloquence and tact of the great French nation into his magnificent task and performed it in a manner worthy of the best and noblest French traditions? It was not he. Was it the influence of money combinations, bribed

papers, or, as many people said, the money of the great munitions organisations ? Why, no. Nobody believes that. What was it ? One thing, and one thing alone—Germany. (Hear, hear.)

I shall never forget a rainy evening in April when I drove down to the Capitol. The Capitol was illuminated from below—white against a black sky. United States troops were collected round it, not for parade, but for defence—and necessary too —and the President came down. I sat on the floor of Congress. The President came in, and in a perfectly calm, quiet, deliberate voice he recited word by word, deed by deed, what Germany had said and done. At the end he said : "I have told you the facts. We have several courses to take. One course we will not take, the course of submission." I shall never forget the cheer I heard at those words. The die was cast ; it was that there was but one course to be taken with honour, and that course was taken.

Why that happened, how that happened, of course you all know in its recent details,

but as a long-standing diplomat I hope you will allow me, as shortly as I can, to go through one or two of the preliminary stages. We were confronted, as the President said, with a thing that had never been known in the history of the world—something that would end us unless we ended it. Now I want to tell you about that thing, that thought, that system, that organism which has done this fearful work in the world. I want to tell you how it began, what it did, when it came into power, and why it must remain in power.

First of all, how it began. When I first knew Germany, thirty-five years ago, I knew the Germany that you have all heard of—gentle, kind, sympathetic. I had many German friends. My German colleagues were my best and most trusted colleagues. Well, all that is changed. Now, how did it change? The history is a very simple one, really. The great German people wished to be united, they wished to be strong. There were two sets of people, who told them different ways in which they could be united. One of them

said, by thought, by liberty, by the co-operation of the German people. The other said, no, by blood and iron alone; and it was not by thought and not by liberty, but it was by blood and iron, the blood and iron of Prussia, that Germany became united and strong. The men of blood and iron pointed to the men of thought and liberty and said: "We have succeeded and you have failed." And, acting on that, they took possession of the thought, feeling, life, heart and soul of the German people. They put the soul of the German people in chains, and they have remained there since. That was how it began.

Now that they were in power, let us hear how they used it. Well, I think you have met a good many people who have seen the way they used it. Mrs Stobart was here the other day. I do not know whether you heard her speak. She and an army of about twenty thousand men, women and children fled for weeks across the mountains of Serbia. Every now and then refugees were coming in with the news that such and such a village

had been burned and every living soul in it massacred. That was what she saw and what she heard. I have spoken with a man who saw a moving army of many thousand Armenians, men, women and children, dying one after the other, with a German officer in charge of the Turkish troops to see that not one of those people escaped. I have spoken with a man who had driven 120 miles along the road in Poland and seen on each side the rags which covered the corpses, the very bones of which had been removed in order to be turned into ammonia; nothing left but the small bones of the hands and the feet, which were not worth burning. He had spoken to German officers who told him: "This is a necessary consequence of war"; that it was a duty to Germany to do such things as that.

As for Belgium, here are the latest facts about what has been done in Belgium. I will read them to you without comment except the comment of your thoughts and your hearts.

"The population of Belgium is about

8,000,000. On that population the war contribution has been $300,000,000. The destruction by private pillage and private fines amounts to $1,600,000,000. The number of civilians murdered by the military authorities is 5000. Two thousand six hundred houses have been burned under direct orders of the military authorities."

That is what they have done. Why has that been done? I can tell you. Because eventually Germany must evacuate Belgium, and they are resolved that when they do evacuate Belgium it shall be a desert. They cannot kill the people as they have killed the Polish people, because there are too many witnesses. They will leave the people, but they will destroy the country. And why? Because that country has been a commercial rival of Germany it is to be destroyed, and it is to be evacuated because it is destroyed, and for no other reason.

That is the operation of this thing, in being. When Mrs Stobart, as a war nurse, was taken prisoner by a German officer—she was liberated owing to the kind intervention

of the United States Minister—she said: "I am no spy. I am a nurse." "What does that matter?" said the German officer. "Don't you know that this is a war of destruction?—*vernichtungskrieg?*" That was his answer. That is what it means—a war of destruction. It means what has happened in Serbia, in Armenia, in Poland, in France, in Belgium. Destroy the people or destroy the country, one or the other, and that as part of a system; not as part of some isolated wickedness of a particular class, a low class, that we can forgive, but the thought-out, elaborated system, and that is the system we are fighting.

Now I want to tell you—I do not want to detain you—I am afraid I have passed already the limit of my talk, but if you will excuse me, I want to say for one moment why this particular system in the interest of the people themselves who are running it must go on. Just before the war there was the Zabern incident. That is, an officer struck down an unoffending tailor, I think—I do not know for what reason—with his sabre, and killed

him. There was an outburst of feeling all over the country—through Germany too. It was perfectly evident that the Germans would not longer stand the militarist *régime.* That was just before the war. Also the Reichstag elections were imminent, and the strong probability was that the Socialists would get the upper hand and that the war votes would no longer be voted. Therefore the war was an absolute necessity for that military party, who were holding the people down. The war took place. See what the consequence is. The moment war is declared there comes the war law, *kriegsrecht.* That means nobody has a right so much as to think for himself. The moment anything is done which the military authorities disapprove of, the perpetrator is sent to the front-line trenches. Every man, woman and child, every industry, all property, are the direct personal possession of the War Lord. You see what that means ? The militarist party, as long as war lasts, have complete control. They have no longer any fear of Socialists, Reichstag, anything. They have complete,

absolute control; and that lasts as long as the war lasts, and not one minute longer.

How they have exercised that control is a matter which is pretty well known to most of us. They have been cruel to us, but they have been very very cruel, almost as cruel, to their own people, and after the war the reckoning will come.

To go to another minor detail, but a very important one—the military people depend almost entirely upon the product of their farms, their landed property. Their great struggle has been always to heighten the price of food for their own profit. Owing to our blockade, of course, the profits on farming have increased out of all measure, partly because of the dearness of provisions and partly because they have been able to use slave labour, that is, the prisoners. So you see—I won't continue this line of argument, but you see that the moment that peace comes the charm is broken; these people lose their power absolutely and entirely, and while they lose their power, the time of reckoning comes and they cannot stand it. What

their record has been we know pretty well, but I rather suspect that the German people know it even better. Their system has been ruin and destruction abroad and enslavement at home. They have used the German people as a means to destroy the liberties of the world, in order to be defrauded of their own. Are there a people in the world who could stand such a thing as that—who, when the facts are known and clearly before them, will not demand their reckoning, will not have their revenge? We know that, and they know that too; and that is why, as Mr Lloyd George says, his cheques are not cashed at the Hindenburg Bank, because his cheques are on a rival institution, which is a bank of peace. Theirs is a bank of war.

The world has had many ideals. Two of the most prominent are present in the minds of all. We have seen the relics of Egypt or Assyria. We have seen the emblem of the ancient religions, the ancient monarchies—the king on his throne, the badge of sovereignty in his hand, the scourge. We have read of the ruins of a palace once decorated

with pictures of burning cities, troops of captives, victims being tortured to death. That was the banquet hall of the King of Assyria. That is one type of civilisation. There is another, the sign of which is the Cross. I need not tell you what that means, but I must say this : the Cross is a sign of patience under suffering, but not patience under wrong. (Applause.) The Cross, gentlemen, is on the banner under which we fight—the Cross of St George, the Cross of St Andrew, the Cross of St Patrick ; different in form, in colour, in history, yes, but the same in spirit, the spirit of sacrifice. We are all subjects of the Prince of Peace, the Prince of Peace Who fought the greatest fight ever fought upon this earth, Who won the greatest victory, and won it by His blood. The Cross is the sign under which we fight against the hideous enemy and by which we shall conquer. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

AN ETON MEMORIAL

AN ETON MEMORIAL

On Saturday, at 3.15, the Provost and Head Master dedicated a stall-plate in memory of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, late British Ambassador at Washington. The stall is fifth from the north door. A similar honour was accorded to another beloved Eton statesman—Alfred Lyttelton, whose brass, with his brother's, is in the Evans' stall opposite. The honour is exceptional, as the stalls are reserved for those holding office in the College.

The service was attended by members of the family, and a number of distinguished Americans and friends from the Foreign Office.

After a very touching prayer, written by the Provost and said by the Head Master, Mr Gerald Balfour, in the absence of his brother, spoke warmly of the charm and brilliance of Sir Cecil, of his keen patriotic insight, and his admirably successful work.

He then read a portion of a letter, in which the warmth of American feeling corrected any coldness shown in this country for so good and loyal a servant and so delightful a character—a sum of £15,000 having been collected anonymously in the United States as a tribute from his friends. This sum will eventually go to Balliol College, to form the Cecil Spring-Rice Scholarships Fund, to help students in Diplomacy to learn foreign tongues abroad.

The stall-plate is copper, with the family arms emblazoned in enamel by Mr Alexander Fisher, and the following inscription:

CECIL ARTHUR SPRING-RICE, P.C.,
G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

Legatus Britannorum plurimas Europae
Asiaeque gentes expertus cum denique
Americanos nobis contra Germanos
sociasset felix obiit MCMXVIII.,
Aet. LIX.

Vir animae cum poeticae tum Christianae,
patriae, ruris, suorum amantissimus.

It will be remembered that Cecil Spring-Rice was in College with J. K. Stephen, and perhaps the most brilliant generation of those days.

(Notice from the *Eton College Chronicle*, October 24, 1918.)

THE CECIL SPRING-RICE MEMORIAL FUND

THE MEMORIAL FUND

DETAILS of the Fund to which Mr Gerald Balfour alluded in his speech at Eton are given in the following letter, dated 23, Wall Street, New York, August 15, 1918, from Mr J. P. Morgan to Lady Spring-Rice :—

It is my privilege to advise you that a large number of American friends of Sir Cecil, desiring to show their appreciation of the magnificent work done by him as British Ambassador in this country, have collected a fund to be known as the "Cecil Spring-Rice Memorial Fund."

The Fund has been invested in £15,000 of U.K. (Third War Loan) 4 per cent. Bonds, exempt from British normal income tax.

It is the desire of the donors that the income from the Fund should be paid to you

during your life, and to the two children, in equal shares, until they are thirty-five years old, should you not live so long, thus providing for their education and maintenance until they are able to support themselves.

The Fund eventually will be transferred to Balliol College Oxford, as the "Cecil Spring-Rice Memorial Fund," the income of which will be used by Balliol for travelling scholarships for young men entering the diplomatic service who have to travel to acquire the necessary foreign languages for that career, thus making a permanent memorial to Sir Cecil's great work. . . .

I feel that it is a great privilege to make this communication to you on behalf of a very large number of donors, whose desire it is to remain anonymous.

PRINTED BY WM. CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

DA
46
S63C5

Chirol, (Sir) Valentine
Cecil Spring-Rice

UTL AT DOWNSVIEW
D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 15 27 07 12 015 4